

# Adding Value to Green Business



A new voluntary program from EPA gives public recognition and greater flexibility to top environmental performers.

By Jane M. Kenny *(as written for the Chemistry Council of New Jersey, February 2003)*

Corporations that demonstrate responsible environmental citizenship tend to be perceived well in the eyes of local communities, consumers, suppliers, distributors, and investors – all of which translates into stronger bottom lines. Now, a program initiated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adds value to the competitive advantage already enjoyed by leading environmentally responsible companies.

The National Environmental Performance Track, a voluntary program, encourages and rewards companies that exhibit high environmental performance that goes beyond regulatory compliance. Performance Track provides companies with recognition, regulatory and administrative flexibility, and a more collaborative relationship with regulators.

Chemistry Council members BASF, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Huntsman Polyurethanes, and 10 Johnson & Johnson facilities, including its corporate headquarters, represent most of the 19 New Jersey facilities participating in Performance Track.

Performance Track companies are going beyond environmental regulatory commitments by installing new equipment, improving processes, recycling, and reducing the use of hazardous chemicals. Members understand that up-front investments make good business and environmental sense. "Our corporate-wide Next Generation Goals to conserve energy and water, improve raw material use efficiency, and reduce hazardous and non-hazardous waste fit well with the continuous improvement criteria of Performance Track," says Vivian Pai, Johnson & Johnson's Executive Director of Worldwide Environmental Affairs. "Engaging all of our US sites [in Performance Track] supports our beyond-compliance strategy and commitment to transparency. It also means that our employees enjoy additional recognition for their hard work."

EPA's commitment to Performance Track starts at the very top. Administrator Whitman is a firm supporter of Performance Track and so am I. Expanding the program is one of my goals for EPA

Region 2 in the coming year. Forty-five of the current 314 Performance Track facilities nationwide are from Region 2. That's a respectable percentage, but not nearly as many as I know we can attract. With more members, we will be doing more good for the environment. Just as important, facilities will gain from the good ideas and perspectives of a larger pool of members.

We are delighted that the Chemistry Council, through Hal Bozarth's leadership, will work with EPA to motivate additional companies in New Jersey to join Performance Track. Together we can achieve our joint goals of a healthier environment and a stronger economy in New Jersey.

## A Winner for Business and the Environment

A core principle of Performance Track is that companies with a history of beyond-compliance behavior and dedication to continuous improvement should be treated differently. To this end the program offers a variety of incentives. The first is public recognition. Program membership includes listing on EPA's web site and mention in feature articles, case studies, and promotional materials. Participants can display the program logo and use it in communications with outside parties. The Performance Track logo is a signal that the facility is responsible, and displaying it has positive value for the company. My hope is that the logo will be viewed as the "Good Housekeeping" environmental seal of approval.

Andrew Jacobs, President and Owner of Ideal Jacobs Corporation, a screen printing company based in Maplewood, states, "The kind of visibility and recognition my small business is getting allows me not only to think bigger but to act bigger as well. Performance Track puts Ideal on an even playing field with the multinationals and larger facilities across the country." Mr. Jacobs adds, "I am in business to make money. Having an EMS not only helps the environment, but directly corresponds to a better bottom-line."

## Incentives Promote Improved Performance

Participants are also considered low-priority for routine EPA inspections. To motivate more facilities to commit to greater environmental performance and to offer additional incentives to participants, EPA proposed a rulemaking on August 13, 2002 which will offer benefits, such as reduced reporting under the Clean Water Act, greater flexibility under the Clean Air Act, and extended onsite accumulation times for hazardous waste generators. Future benefits eligible to Performance Track members only may include reporting reductions under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and expedited approval for decisions under the Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT) provisions of the Clean Air Act.

Another benefit is participation in meetings with senior EPA officials, special-invitation conferences, and networks to share best practices. In October 2002, EPA Region 2 co-hosted along with the New Jersey Business & Industry Association and The Business Council of New York State a networking forum for members, business groups, states, and EPA officials.

It was a pleasure for me to welcome 40 participants to EPA, present new members with their program certificates, and applaud the performance of the region's participants, which combined in 2001 to reduce their hazardous-waste generation by 20 million pounds and reduce water use by 100 million gallons. As part of the forum officials from Performance Track members Nucor Steel, IBM, and Dresser Rand shared their innovative approaches to reduce water use in a session called "Best Practices in Water Conservation."

## Gaining Ground

So far, more than 120 companies, representing 314 facilities, have joined Performance Track. Participants range from small local businesses to large multinational corporations, and cover almost every state. They represent a number of manufacturing sectors: chemicals; rubber and plastics; metal; industrial, transportation, and electronic equipment; instruments; and textile, wood, paper, and printing products.

"Bristol-Myers Squibb Company was eager to join Performance Track as a Charter Member because we strongly support voluntary partnerships as a means of advancing environmental protection," says Dave Matthews, Manager, Environmental Affairs at the company. "The program provides national recognition for exemplary environmental performance, management, and reporting while requiring public commitments, in our case to reduce water use, air emissions, and solid waste. [Performance

Track] has also enhanced our ability to work with top government officials in a cooperative manner to achieve common goals. We stand by the Council's decision to work with EPA to grow the membership base and strengthen NJDEP's involvement in the program."

## Program Criteria

To qualify for Performance Track, applicants need to meet four entry criteria: (1) Operational environmental management system; (2) Demonstrable environmental achievements and commitment to continued improvement; (3) Commitment to public performance reporting and public outreach; and (4) Track record of sustained compliance with environmental requirements.

## Application Period for 2003

Companies interested in improving the return on their environmental performance may apply to Performance Track during the current application period, which ends April 30. The Council's Annual Meeting in April will include a Performance Track workshop at which participating CCNJ members will make presentations and EPA officials will discuss eligibility criteria, program requirements, and advice on completing an application. The next application period runs from August 1 to October 31, 2003.

I encourage you to reach out to Chemistry Council members participating in the program. Ask them about their experience working with EPA; get a feel for the application process and the value of membership. If your facility requires technical assistance prior to applying, EPA can match you up with a member through the Performance Track Mentoring Program.

Application information and a membership directory are at [www.epa.gov/performance-track](http://www.epa.gov/performance-track). Call us now to determine if you are ready for Performance Track. If your facility is located in EPA Region 2 contact Marcia Seidner, regional program director, at 212/637-3584 or [seidner.marcia@epa.gov](mailto:seidner.marcia@epa.gov). By participating in this program, you can join more than 300 businesses earning recognition as leaders in environmental responsibility.

***Jane M. Kenny is the Regional Administrator of EPA Region 2 serving New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and seven federally recognized Indian Nations. She oversees an annual budget of approximately \$760 million and a staff of nearly 1,000 people.***